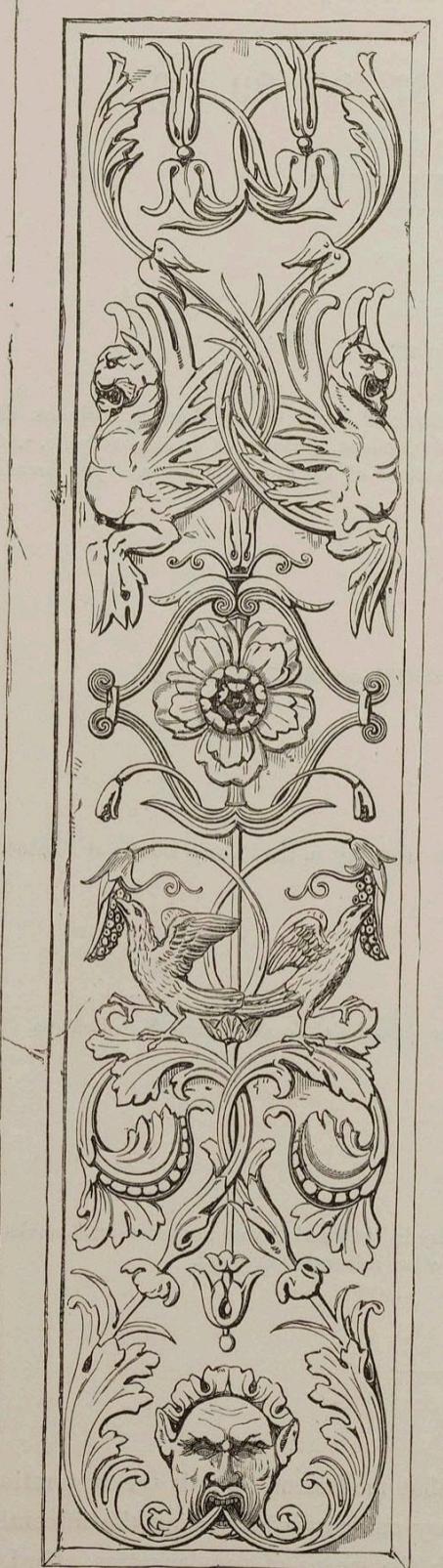


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Serlio, Palladio, Vignola, and Rusconi, presented permanent records of the zeal with which the monuments of antiquity had been studied. But inasmuch as the requirements of the Italian Social system of the sixteenth century differed from those of the Imperial ages of Rome, so of a necessity the nature of the monuments created to supply those wants materially differed. In the Renaissance styles of the fifteenth century the artist's attention had been mainly directed to the imitation of ancient ornament; in the sixteenth, however, it was principally the restoration of ancient proportions, both of the five orders and of architectural symmetry generally, that engaged the designer's attention; pure ornament having been to a great extent neglected in its details, and considered only in its mass as a decorative adjunct to architecture. Those arts which during the fifteenth century had been so frequently united in the persons of the *maestri*, under whom great monuments had been carried into execution, in the sixteenth became individualised. The genius of such intellectual giants as Raffaelle and Michael Angelo could alone maintain the triple attributes of painters, architects, and sculptors, in due relative subordination; when, in after times, men such as Bernini and Pietro da Cortona attempted similar combinations, the result was little else than general confusion and failure. As the rules of Art became more complex, academies arose in which the division-of-labour system was introduced. The consequences, with certain rare and notable exceptions, were obvious: architects thought of little else but plans, sections, and elevations, in which the setting out of columns, arches, pilasters, entablatures, &c., was all in all; painters worked more in their studios, and less in the buildings, their works were to adorn; forgetting altogether general decorative effect, and looking only to anatomical precision, powerful chiar'oscuro, masterly composition, and breadth of tone and handling. Sculptors of a high class deserted ornamental carving and gave their attention, almost exclusively, to isolated statues and groups, or monuments in which general effects of beauty were made subservient to the development of the plastic features alone. Ornament was left in a great degree to accident or caprice in its design, and to second-rate artists in its execution. Favourable specimens of such ornaments may be seen in our woodcuts. The painted arabesques of the Italian style, and the *stucchi* with which they were occasionally accompanied, form so remarkable an exception to the above, that it will be well to reserve them for special notice. Although the architecture which Raffaelle has left to us in the Pandolfini Palace at Florence, and the Cafferelli, late Stoppani, at Rome, is excellent; it is in his connexion with the subject of arabesque that his celebrity as an ornamentist consists, and we shall not therefore further allude to him here. Neither shall we dwell upon the



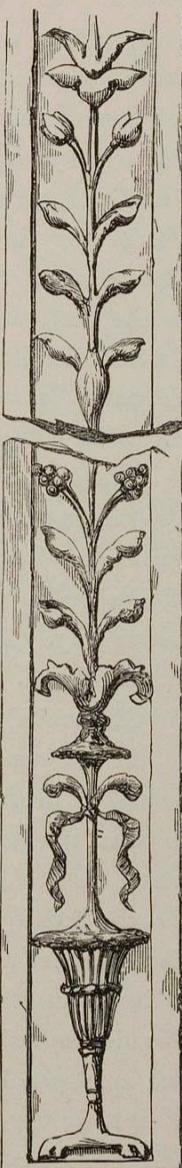
Soffitto Panel, from one of the Genoese Palaces.
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works of Baldassare Peruzzi, interesting though they be, since, so far as ornament was concerned, they approached so closely to the antique as to offer no striking individuality. Bramante, too, is to be regarded rather as a Renaissance artist than in any other light. It is to the great Florentine, whose fervid genius, impatient of restraint, broke away from tradition, that we must look for that germ of self-willed originality that infected all his contemporaries in every department of art, and engendered a license which, it is vain to deny, ultimately, and in feebler hands than his, resulted in a departure from taste and refinement in every branch of art.

Michael Angelo was born in 1474 of the noble Florentine family of the Buonarrotti, descendants of the Counts of Canossa: he was a pupil of Domenico Ghirlandaio; and having early distinguished himself by his talent for sculpture, he was invited to study in the school founded for its culture by Lorenzo de Medici. On the banishment of the Medici family from Florence in 1494, Michael Angelo retired to Bologna, where he worked at the tomb of St. Dominic; after some little time he returned to Florence, and, before he was twenty-three years of age, he had executed the celebrated "Cupid," which was the cause of his being invited to Rome, and also his "Bacchus." At Rome, amongst many other works by him, is the "Pieta" sculptured by order of Cardinal d'Amboise, and now in St. Peter's. The gigantic statue of "David," at Florence, was his next great performance; and at twenty-nine years of age he returned to Rome, summoned by Julius II. for the purpose of erecting his mausoleum; for this building the "Moses" at San Pietro in Vincoli, and the "Slaves" in the Louvre, were originally destined, but it was completed on a smaller scale than was at first intended. The painting of the Sistine Chapel was the next work undertaken by him, and one of his greatest, whether we regard the sublimity of the performance, or the influence which it exercised on contemporary art, as well as on that of after-times. In 1541 he completed his vast fresco of the "Last Judgment," painted for Pope Paul III. The remainder of his long life was chiefly devoted to the construction of St. Peter's, on which work he was employed at the time of his death, in 1564, and for which he refused all remuneration.

In everything executed during the long life of Michael Angelo the desire for novelty seems to have divided his attention from the study of excellence alone. His daring innovations in ornament are no less striking than in other departments of design. His large broken pediments and mouldings, his sweeping consoles and scrolls, his direct imitation (saving an alloy of exaggeration) of Nature in some of his enrichments, and the amount of plain face he uniformly preserved in his architectural compositions, brought new elements into the field, which were greedily snapped up by men of less inventive power than he himself possessed. The style of the Roman School of Design was altogether changed through Michael Angelo; and Giacomo della Porta, Domenico Fontana, Bartolomeo Ammanati, Carlo Maderno, and, last not least, Vignola himself, so far as ornament was concerned, adopted, with a few of his beauties, many of his defects, the greatest being exaggeration of manner. At Florence, Baccio Bandinelli and Benvenuto Cellini were among his ardent admirers and imitators. Happily Venice escaped the contagion in a great degree,—or, at least, resisted its influence longer than almost any other part of Italy. This immunity was due, in a great degree, to the counteracting influence of a genius less hardy than that of Michael Angelo, but far more refined, and scarcely less universal. We allude, of course, to the greatest of the two Sansovinos—Giacopo.



Vertical Ornament from Genoa.